

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

FEBRUARY 16, 1858.—Ordered to be printed.

Mr. POLK made the following

REPORT.

[To accompany Bill S. 144.]

*The Committee on Foreign Relations, to whom was referred the memorial of Commodore Charles G. Ridgely, praying remuneration for various necessary expenditures incurred by him, as commanding officer of the naval forces of the United States on the South American station, in 1820-'21, have had the same under consideration, and now report :*

That on the 17th of January, 1837, Mr. Howard, from the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives, to whom this memorial had been referred, made a report thereon, setting forth concisely the facts of the case, and the reasons which induced them to recommend the granting of the relief asked for, together with a bill for that purpose. Upon a review of that report, and its comparison with the papers accompanying the memorial, this committee are satisfied that the merits of the case are properly set forth therein. They therefore adopt it as their report, and recommend the passage of the bill herewith reported.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, February 9, 1848.

*The Committee on Foreign Affairs, to whom was referred the memorial of Commodore Charles G. Ridgely, praying remuneration for various expenditures incurred by him in 1820-'21, respectfully report :*

That they have examined the case, and are of the opinion that the memorialist is entitled to relief for the reasons stated in a report made by Mr. Howard, from the Committee on Foreign Affairs, to the House of Representatives, at the 1st session of the 25th Congress, to which report the committee would respectfully refer the House. The committee have prepared a bill for the relief of the memorialist, which they are of the opinion should pass.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, *January 17, 1837.*

Mr. HOWARD, from the Committee on Foreign Affairs, made the following report:

That, during the years 1820 and 1821, whilst Captain Ridgely was in command of the American squadron in the Pacific ocean, and when war was raging in Peru and Chili, the Spanish viceroy, having been deposed, sought a temporary refuge, with his suite and attendants, on board of the United States frigate *Constellation*, under the command of Captain Ridgely; that he incurred considerable expenses in entertaining these guests; that, on other occasions, he received distinguished Spaniards on board of his squadron, owing to the prevailing unsettled state of things; and that, whilst he was affording them a protection, dictated by humanity, and warranted by his instructions from the Navy Department, incurred extraordinary expenses in entertaining them; and that he also performed other services, during his cruise, not falling within the ordinary duties of the commander of a squadron, but demanded by the unsettled condition of public affairs, and the consequent necessity of protecting the substantial interests of his country.

Upon referring to the Navy Department for a knowledge of the instructions under which Captain Ridgely sailed, for the purpose of ascertaining whether his conduct was justified by them, the committee find that a large discretionary power was given (as ought to have been given) to the commanding officer, upon such a distant and delicate duty. The Secretary of the Navy directed him, among other things, as follows: "In touching at the ports of Chili and Peru, and all others in South America, you will ascertain whether the trading or whale ships of the United States are molested in the prosecution of their voyages, and the causes of such molestation, and afford to them all particular relief, in cases of need; and, at all the ports you may visit, make such display of the ship under your command as shall be best calculated to produce impressions favorable to the interests of the United States." "You will visit all the United States ships and vessels you may meet, with a view to ascertain their situation, and whether they have been interrupted in their lawful pursuits; afford them aid, protection, and security, consistently with the laws of nations and the respect due to the existing authorities, wherever and whenever such protection and aid shall be needed and can be afforded."

The two following examples are selected amongst the services performed by Captain Ridgely under these general instructions, which appear to the committee to fall legitimately within their scope. In 1821 a revolution took place at Lima, in Peru, and that city fell into the hands of General San Martin. Immediately preceding the fall of the city, the Viceroy of Spain, General Pezuela, an old gentleman of seventy years of age, and who had been Viceroy of Peru for twelve years, was deposed, and made his escape on board an American merchant ship, called the *General Brown*. He was accompa-

nied by his son-in-law, a colonel in the service of the King of Spain, and by his confessor. In a day or two after this event, the frigate *Constellation* arrived, and Captain Ridgely found a determination existing, on the part of the commander of the fleet of Chili, to capture the *General Brown*, with the intention of sacrificing the life of this venerable Viceroy, and listened, from humanity and policy, to the appeal for protection on board of his ship for the governor who had, for so many years, presided over the country, and who might, perhaps, be soon called upon to resume his power. All the other ports of Peru were at that time under the government of Spain, and prudence, therefore, required that a kind feeling towards the American flag should be maintained in those ports. These persons were received on board of the frigate by Captain Ridgely as his guests, and entertained at his expense, until an opportunity was afforded of placing them in safety.

Upon another occasion, Mr. Prevost, then at Lima, exhibited to Captain Ridgely a letter which he had received from the master of a large merchant ship, belonging to New York, with a very valuable cargo on board, stating that his vessel was taken possession of by the authorities of Guayaquil, and calling for assistance from the civil and military powers of his country. The revolution of Guayaquil at that moment, and the absence of all regular government, required a speedy and effectual interposition. Although Mr. Prevost was not, perhaps, strictly accredited, according to diplomatic etiquette, to the authorities of Guayaquil, yet he was known to be an agent of the American government, and Captain Ridgely promptly repaired with him to the relief of their countryman in distress. The union of civil and military interference was too influential to be resisted, and the vessel was released; but the expenses of maintaining Mr. Prevost fell, of course, upon Captain Ridgely, and are properly chargeable to the United States.

These two cases will serve to illustrate the general character of the services rendered by Captain Ridgely, under his instructions, and it is unnecessary to enumerate more. The price of provisions is represented to have been enormous. Captain Clack certifies that, at the time when the Viceroy was received on board, flour was selling for one hundred dollars per barrel, and other articles proportionably high. Although no precise data exist in the case, from which to compute exactly the expense sustained by the commodore, the committee have endeavored to ascertain it, and believe that six thousand dollars would not be more than a fair allowance.

They, therefore, report a bill for that amount.

